

The University of Alberta Department of Music presents:

MUSIC AT CONVOCATION HALL



Tanya Prochazka, cello
Magdalena Adamek-Kurgan, piano

Sunday, October 26, 2008

7:15 pm Pre-concert Talk by **Dr David Cook**

8:00 pm Concert

Convocation Hall, Arts Building, University of Alberta



DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Program

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|---|--------------------------------|
| Nocturne for Solo Piano, Op Posth (1830)
arranged for cello and piano by G Piatigorsky
Lento | Frédéric Chopin
(1810–1849) |
| Introduction and Polonaise Brillante, Op 3 (1829 - 1830)
Lento
Alla Polacca | Frédéric Chopin |
| La Fille Aux Cheveux De Lin (1909-1910)
from Preludes Book 1
arranged for cello and piano by L R Feuillard
Très calme et doucement expressif | Claude Debussy
(1862-1918) |
| Le Petit Berger from Children's Corner
for Solo Piano (1906-1908)
arranged for cello and piano by F Ronchini
Très modéré | Claude Debussy |
| Sonata for Cello and Piano (1915)
Lent, sostenuto e molto risoluto
Sérénade, Modérément anime, Fantasque et léger
Finale, Animé | Claude Debussy |
| Intermission | |
| Nocturne for Solo Piano (1892)
arranged for cello and piano by P Bazelaire
Lent | Claude Debussy |
| Minstrels from Preludes Book 1 for Solo Piano (1909-1910)
arranged for cello and piano by R Bergmann | Claude Debussy |
| Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op 63 (1845-6)
Allegro moderato
Scherzo, allegro con brio
Largo, dolce cantabile
Finale, allegro | Frédéric Chopin |

Program Notes

by Andrea Eng

Frédéric Chopin (1810 – 1849)

Frédéric François Chopin was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1810 to a French father and Polish mother. Recognized as a child prodigy (his first surviving composition was a *Polonaise* written when he was only seven years old), Chopin studied piano and composition privately before entering into the High School of Music in 1826. In 1829, he toured Europe, settling in Paris in 1831 and establishing himself as a piano teacher, performer, and composer. A prolific composer over a very short life, his work is almost exclusively for the piano. As he matured as a composer, Chopin began composing more works that pushed boundaries in dissonance and tonal conformities of the day as well as working beyond his comfort zone of solo piano works. He wrote only a handful of chamber works, all including piano, two of which are included on tonight's program: the first and last of his chamber works, both for piano and cello.

Nocturne, Opus Posthumous (1830)

There is little solid information about this nocturne, arguably the most popular of the nocturnes attributed to Chopin. In fact even the attribution to Chopin himself is in question in scholarly circles, however there is no doubt in the mind of those who love Chopin's music. This difficulty in attribution arises from the nature of the composition and subsequent publication. There is no record of this nocturne prior to its publication in Russia in 1875, but this can be explained by the reported composition date being only a short time prior to Chopin's departure from war torn Poland, and it is conceivable that the piece could have been lost or forgotten at that time, only to be discovered several decades later.

This is only Chopin's second attempt at a nocturne, and his inexperience with the genre might be perceived in the brevity of the piece – even with a *lento* tempo marking, it is markedly shorter than almost all of his subsequent nocturnes – as well as the delicate melodic line that is stretched over and equally delicate bass line accompaniment. The popularity of this nocturne has led to its transcription to many instruments, including cello. This transcription is by Ukrainian–American cellist Gregor Piatigorsky.

Introduction and Polonaise Brillante, Opus 3 (1829–1830)

The *Polonaise* of the *Introduction and Polonaise Brillante, Opus 3* (1828–1830) was composed during a visit to the estate of Prince Antoni Radziwill in the summer of 1829, immediately following Chopin's departure from the High School of Music. Prince Radziwill of Poland was a benefactor of the Chopin family and supporter of Chopin's work. Chopin spent his summers at the prince's estate beginning in 1827, where he became friends with the prince's daughters, Princess Eliza and Princess Wanda. An amateur cellist, Prince Antoni hired the young composer in the summer of 1829 to instruct Princess Wanda in piano. It appears from various of Chopin's letters that he had intended this work to be played by the prince and his daughter, and although Princess Wanda was young, she must have been an accomplished pianist, as is demonstrated by the incredibly difficult piano part in comparison to the relatively idiomatic, almost timid, writing for the cello. There is also evidence that Chopin may have written a solo piano version of the *Polonaise* for Princess Wanda to continue working at her pianistic talents. The *Introduction* was added at a later date and the first publication in 1831 was dedicated to his classmate and close friend, cellist Joseph Merk.

A different work, the *Piano Trio, Opus 8*, also written in the summer of 1829, was dedicated to Prince Radziwill. In a letter to his friend Titus Woiciechowski in March of 1830,

Chopin himself dismissed the *Polonaise* as ‘sparkling effects for the drawing room and for the ladies, nothing more’. In spite of these dismissive comments, the work still presents considerable challenges for the cellist who must draw out a memorable melodic line from only a few notes and against a strongly virtuosic piano part.

Sonata for cello and piano, Opus 63 (1845–1846)

Chopin’s *Sonata for cello and piano*, Opus 63 is his last chamber work and was dedicated to Auguste–Joseph Franchomme, his close friend and a professor of cello at the Conservatoire. This work demonstrates not only Chopin’s growth and maturity as a composer (especially when compared with his first chamber work, the *Introduction and Polonaise Brillante, Opus 3* heard earlier), but also his increased comfort in composing for an instrument other than the piano. Chopin’s greater ease in writing for the cello may have been the result of help from Franchomme, who no doubt was able to offer advice in regards to the capabilities of the instrument. Another result of Franchomme’s influence and ability with the cello can be found in finding the delicate balance between the demanding Romantic cello and the equally difficult and intricate piano parts.

The piece was premiered in February 1848 with Chopin at the piano. This was his final concert appearance. The ‘Allegro’ movement was left off of the program at the premiere as Chopin was not satisfied enough with it to perform it. Another theory proposed for the omission of this movement was that the work incorporates a quotation from Schubert’s *Winterreise*, included by Chopin in reference to his separation from his long-time lover, poet George Sand.

Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)

Claude Debussy is most often considered to be an impressionist composer, however, the influences on his work and sources of his inspirations were many and varied. Born into a peasant family, Debussy did not attend a normal school or take any sort of formal lessons aside from the years he spent at the Conservatoire in Paris between 1872 and 1880. Debussy highly valued knowledge and education and as a result of being mostly self-educated, he made a point of taking every opportunity to learn. Using these varied experiences to inspire his music, this freedom from formal constraints allowed him to become a uniquely visionary composer.

Like many of his contemporaries such as Ravel and Fauré, Debussy was entranced by the new musical sounds that he heard at the Paris Exhibition in 1889. The new sonorities, rhythms, and tonalities gave him further materials to work with in his compositions. He also drew inspiration from beyond the formal musics of Europe and employed tonalities and sounds of popular music of North America as well as Europe.

Debussy is legendary for a perpetual dissatisfaction with his compositions, particularly those for piano. He would sketch and work, and then re-work his compositions many times. He would even avoid performances of his own works if possible and would be full of scathing commentary when he did attend. Despite this, or perhaps in light of this, Debussy was a great proponent of the musician finding his or her own interpretation and style from the written score. He was greatly opposed to making detailed notations or fingerings, and he felt that a well-written piece would allow a good musician to find the best fingerings and performance style for them naturally within the music. This freedom of interpretation afforded to the performers may have been one of the reasons why many transcriptions of Debussy’s piano music into other instrumentations were completed within his lifetime, some re-scored by his friends and contemporaries.

La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin (1909–1910)

In late 1909 and early 1910 Debussy began work on a book of 12 preludes that were composed, completed, and published in a mere three months between December and February. These *Preludes* are remarkable for the fact that, although they are all titled, the titles appear in parentheses and after ellipses at the end of the piece, as if offered as a suggestion for interpretation, or simply as an afterthought.

La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin (The Girl with the Flaxen Hair) was written after a Parnassian poem of the same name by Leconte de Lisle about a young Scottish girl with beautiful hair. The melody begins simply and in a pentatonic mode. The melodic setting is spacious, simple, and clear, full of innocence and the simplicity of images suggested by the idea of a young woman whose blonde hair blows in the wind. Originally for piano solo, this piece has been transcribed for cello and piano by Louis Feuillard, a French cellist and teacher who was a contemporary and close friend of Debussy.

“Le Petit Berger” from *Children’s Corner* for solo piano (1906–1908)

Debussy’s piano suite *Children’s Corner* was written and dedicated to his daughter Chouchou on her third birthday. The pieces were never meant for children to play, but rather to depict the world of children and their imaginations. Debussy took inspiration from Chouchou’s toys and interests to create the tableaux in these miniatures.

The title “Le Petit Berger” has actually been translated into French from the original English title that Debussy gave it, “The Little Shepherd.” This was one of two English titled pieces in the suite (the other being “The Snow is Dancing”), most likely in honour of Chouchou’s English nanny. Beginning with a sustained melody reminiscent of the introduction to his *Prelude à “l’après-midi d’une faune”* the shepherd can be heard making short calls on his pipe as he roams the fields in search of his flock. He skips along, occasionally stopping to find a lost sheep (or melody), then continuing on his journey. He finally slows his gait when he has found his sheep, and the melody comes to a peaceful rest. Ferdinand Ronchini has transcribed this version of the piece for cello and piano.

Sonata for cello and piano (1915)

This work was written in 1915 at a very tumultuous and perhaps one of the most compositionally productive times in Debussy’s life. Despite ongoing complaints of exhaustion through the summer of 1915, Debussy was able to complete some of his best known works including the *Sonata for violin, flute, and harp*, the *Etudes*, and *En Blanc et noir*, he also began work on the *Sonata for cello and piano*. In the autumn of 1915 Debussy was diagnosed and treated for bowel cancer which left him hospitalized for several weeks. It was then that he was able to complete the *Sonata for cello and piano*. This work and the *Violin Sonata* (1916) were the last major works Debussy was able to complete.

The *Sonata for cello and piano* can be perceived as a parody of many contemporary styles, which was the goal Debussy was aiming for. The piano part begins the ‘Prologue’ with thick chords and bluesy tones reminiscent of popular music styles that were on the rise throughout Europe and North America in the early years of WWI. Despite the *lento* tempo marking, both pianist and cellist take turns racing through passages that demonstrate the flexibility of instruments and the virtuosity of their playing. The ‘Serenade’ movement used the idiomatic pizzicato of the cello to suggest the sounds of a guitar being plucked. The ‘Finale’ continues this use of pizzicato, but with a much greater sense of fluidity and quasi ‘aquatic’ character as the music rolls like waves, sometimes gently or rhythmically, or even brusquely, but always in motion and in a state of flux. The unifying element in all three movements is a melodic line introduced first in the ‘Prologue’ that returns several times throughout the work, weaving through the changing moods of the movements in various forms.

Nocturne (1892)

Characteristically, although Debussy's music is greatly influenced by the standard compositional forms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it rarely stays within the constraints of these forms and genres. This is true even for a new genre as ambiguous as the nocturne, which is defined only as a single movement work having a dreamy character that makes liberal use of *rubato*. But Debussy did not feel constrained by even these rules and liberally employs significant changes in tempo and texture in addition to the general flexibility afforded the genre.

Originally written for piano solo at the time when Debussy was just beginning to be noticed in greater Parisian society as a distinguished artist and composer, the *Nocturne* opens in a low register with slow moving chords, as if to establish the sense of night and to ground the piece in time, while lighter rising figures carry the music away to a dream-like space. This brief introduction melts into a world of rich sonorities that play with the brief melodic line introduced by the opening chords. This melody shifts and changes almost imperceptibly as it is masked by the various tempo and texture changes. The introductory statement returns twice; once at the mid-point, before returning to the melodic play that made up the first part of the nocturne, and then again right before the close of the work, where it is interrupted by quick, rising arpeggiated chords. The *Nocturne* was transcribed for cello and piano by Debussy's friend and contemporary Paul Bazelaire, a French cellist and instructor at the Paris Conservatoire.

Minstrels from *Preludes Book 1* for solo piano (1909–1910)

Debussy's *Minstrels* prelude is a parody of the American style minstrel show that was popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The accompaniment begins as the dancers come on stage and begin their performance. Two distinct voices, or performers, can be heard over a rollicking dance-like accompaniment, one low and brusque, slower and more serious; the other much higher and quick, light on its feet – like the clown who gets all the laughs. The musical characters begin together, and then trade off, the lighter voice asking for more attention. They sing another song together before the accompaniment figure of the opening returns to cue the end of the show and they all exit in a flurry of movement.

Tanya Prochazka

Professor of cello, chamber music, conductor of the Academy Strings and University Symphony Orchestras and Head of the String Department at the University of Alberta, Canada, cellist Tanya Prochazka (Hunt) is a soloist, chamber musician, conductor, freelance player and teacher.

Born in Melbourne, Australia, Ms Prochazka began her cello studies with Marianne Hunt and Henri Touzeau, both eminent Australian cello teachers. She pursued her studies at the Paris Conservatoire with Andre Navarra and in Bloomington, Indiana with Janos Starker. Her conducting teacher and mentor is distinguished conductor John Hopkins. Her early professional activities took her to Vienna, Austria. From Vienna, as cellist with Ensemble I, she performed throughout Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Australia. Subsequently, as a resident of London, England, she performed throughout Britain as soloist and chamber musician and regularly for the BBC in recitals and chamber music concerts.

Ms Prochazka gathered a number of prizes at prestigious competitions: Australian Broadcasting Commission Concerto Competition, Cassado Competition in Florence, Italy, International Tribune in Czechoslovakia, semi-finalist at the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, the Suggia Prize in London.

Since arriving in Edmonton, Canada in 1986, Ms Prochazka has become one of Canada's leading cellists. Her repertoire ranges from the Baroque period through to the present day. She broadcasts frequently on CBC radio and regularly collaborates nationally and internationally with such artists as Stéphane Lemelin, Erika Raum, Martin Riseley, Guillaume Tardif, Janet Scott Hoyt, Jacques Despres, Milton Schlosser, Brachi Tilles and the Beau, Lafayette and Penderecki String quartets.

In March, 2004 Tanya performed the world premier of the Cello Concerto, "La Rosa Enflorece" especially composed for her by Alfred Fisher with the Kingston Symphony Orchestra, with conductor Glen Fast. In October 2004 she joined violist Rivka Golani in another world premier performance of Malcolm's Forsyth's new Double Concerto for viola, cello and orchestra, with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Bill Eddins. She also performed the Brahms Double Concerto with Israeli violinist Daniel Kossov in Melbourne, Australia, September, 2004. Highlights of the last four seasons were her performances of all of Bach's Suites for solo cello, "Bach By Candlelight" in Edmonton and Cambridge, England, string quartets in the side canyons of the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, Beethoven Triple Concerto in London, England, solo Bach and Britten in Melbourne and Edmonton, recitals in Paris, Prague, Melbourne, Brisbane, Edmonton and Calgary, chamber music festivals in Sooke BC, Pender Harbour BC and Prince Edward County Ontario.

Ms Prochazka is highly regarded as a devoted teacher. She taught at the Royal Academy of Music and at the Guildhall School of Music in London. In 1998, she was appointed Professor of Cello, Strings, and Chamber Music and Conductor of the University Symphony Orchestra and the Academy Strings Orchestra at the University of Alberta. In 2002 Prochazka led the Academy Strings Orchestra on a concert and educational tour of Cuba, which included performances in Cienfuegos, Santa Clara and Havana. She directed a tour of Alberta with the Academy Strings in combination with the premier student string ensemble, Musica Eterna, from Havana, Cuba in 2005. Tanya is also a regular teacher at the Sooke Chamber Music Workshop on Vancouver Island.

In 2003, Tanya made her opera conducting debut with 4 performances of Mozart's Magic Flute with the USO and the Music Department's Opera Workshop program, and conducted Puccini's "Gianni Schicchi" and Menotti's "Old Maid and the Thief" in 2005, again with the USO and the Music Department's Opera Workshop program.

In 2008 Ms Prochazka conducted Walton's "Coronation Te Deum" and Parry's "I was Glad" with the USO and the Choir of Choirs in the University of Alberta's Centenary Celebrations in Edmonton's Winspear Centre and Calgary's Jack Singer Hall. She is planning to take the USO on a tour of China in May 2010.

Ms Prochazka leads cello master classes, string and string and symphony orchestra workshops wherever her concerts take her. She is also in demand as a competition jury member and string festival adjudicator.

Her world premier recording of the "New Goldberg Variations", with pianist Jacques Després, of variations composed by leading American composers Frazelle, Rouse, Lieberman, Corigliano, Schickele and Danielpour on the Goldberg Aria theme by Bach has met with resounding critical success. This adds to her growing discography of CDs: "American Cello Masterpieces", "Poulenc, Fauré and Saint-Saëns", "Landsmal", Canadian Solo Cello works by Fisher and Ho, and "The Passionate Englishman", "Bohemian Woods", music by Dvořák, Janáček and Martinu, with pianist Milton Schlosser and Dvořák's Cello Concerto with the University Symphony Orchestra.

Magdalena Adamek-Kurgan

Magdalena Adamek-Kurgan holds a Master of Arts in Piano Performance from the Chopin Academy of Music, Warsaw, Poland, and Doctor of Music in Piano Performance from the University of Alberta, Canada.

She has led an active performing career, giving performances across Poland, Germany, Austria, Lithuania, France, China, USA and Canada, with repertoire ranging from the classical period to contemporary. Adamek-Kurgan's long-term artistic project involves promoting piano music by composers who have been unfairly neglected or forgotten; for instance, Polish post-romantic composer Feliks Nowowiejski. Over the past few years the artistic project concerning Nowowiejski involved world premiere recordings of Nowowiejski's music for piano solo, a doctoral essay devoted to Nowowiejski's music for piano solo (*Piano Works by Feliks Nowowiejski*), as well as both national and international lectures and presentations.

She graduated from the Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw in 2000 under the tutelage of Professor Barbara Hesse-Bukowska. In 2006 she completed her Doctor of Music in Piano Performance degree at the University of Alberta in Edmonton under supervision of Professor Jacques Després. During workshops and summer programs, she also worked under the guidance of such renowned pianists as Halina Czerny-Stefanska, Andrzej Jasinski, Paul Badura-Škoda, Stéphane Lemelin, Kyoko Hashimoto, and Kevin Fitz-Gerald.

She has been a recipient of numerous prestigious scholarly and performing awards, including the Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Scholarship, Dissertation Fellowship, Mary Louise Imrie Graduate Award, FS Chia PhD Scholarship, Beryl Barns Memorial Graduate Scholarship, Harriet Snowball Winspear Graduate Prize in Performing Arts scholarship (U of A), the Marek Jablonski Piano Scholarship for the Banff International Keyboard Festival and a scholarship by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (awarded twice). Magdalena Adamek-Kurgan has also been a laureate of the 2nd prize and a special distinction for the best performance of piano works by Frederick Chopin at International Milosz Magin Piano Competition in Paris (1997), 3rd prize in the piano trio category at Kiejstut Bacewicz International Chamber Music Competition in Łódź, Poland (1998), 3rd prize at the National Piano Competition in Warsaw (1994), and distinction at the National Chamber Music Competition in Warsaw (1994). She also represented Poland at the II European Piano Forum at Hochschule der Künste in Berlin (1999).

Her discography includes five CDs for independent Polish label Acte Préalable, with works of Feliks Nowowiejski, Milosz Magin, Romuald Twardowski and Jozef Elsner. The latest recording project, *Romantic Central Europe*, was made in collaboration with the Wirth Institute of Austrian and Central European Studies at the University of Alberta and contains piano works by Carl Czerny, Franz Schubert, Frederick Chopin and Feliks Nowowiejski. Her performances have been broadcast on CBC, Polish National Radio, Radio France, ABC Radio Classic.

Since June 2005 Dr Adamek-Kurgan has served on the Board of the Marek Jablonski Endowment. She is also co-artistic director of a newly launched concert series in Edmonton entitled "Composers' Celebration," led under patronage of Alberta Registered Music Teachers Association. In addition to performing Magdalena Adamek-Kurgan enjoys being a teacher, adjudicator, and workshop presenter.

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